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Security Council

Sixty-eighth year

Provisional

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Thursday, 25 July 2013, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Kerry/Mrs. DiCarlo/Mr. DeLaurentis	(United States of America)
Members:	Argentina	Mrs. Perceval
	Australia	Mr. Quinlan
	Azerbaijan	Mr. Mehdiyev
	China	Mr. Wang Min
	France	Mr. Canfin
	Guatemala	Mr. Carrera
	Luxembourg	Mr. Asselborn
	Morocco	Mr. Loulichki
	Pakistan	Mr. Masood Khan
	Republic of Korea	Mr. Kim Sook
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
	Rwanda	Ms. Mushikiwabo
	Togo	Mr. Esaw
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Mark Lyall Grant

Agenda

The situation in the Great Lakes region

Supporting the Great Lakes Framework

Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region (S/2013/387)

Letter dated 3 July 2013 from the Chargé d'affaires, a.i. of the United States Mission to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2013/394)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Great Lakes region

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Letter dated 3 July 2013 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the United States Mission to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2013/394)

The President: It is my pleasure to warmly welcome the Secretary-General, the Ministers and the other representatives present in the Security Council Chamber. I think that their participation in this meeting is an affirmation of the importance of the subject matter that is under discussion.

Under rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Belgium, Burundi, the Republic of the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mozambique, South Africa, the United Republic of Tanzania and Uganda to participate in this meeting.

Under rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Jim Yong Kim, President of the World Bank, to participate in this meeting.

On behalf of the Council, I welcome Mr. Kim, who is joining today's meeting via videoconference from Washington.

Under rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Ms. Mary Robinson, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region.

Under rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite His Excellency Mr. Ramtane Lamamra, Commissioner for Peace and Security of the African Union, to participate in this meeting.

Under rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Pierre Vimont, Executive Secretary General of the European External Action Service, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2013/387, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region.

I wish also to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2013/394, which contains a letter dated 3 July 2013 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the United States Mission to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General.

Before the Council is a statement by the President on behalf of the Council on the subject of today's meeting. I thank all Council members for their valuable contributions to this statement. In accordance with the understanding reached among the members of the Council, I shall take it that the members of the Security Council agree to the statement, which will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/2013/11.

It is so decided.

It is now my enormous privilege to make a statement in my capacity as the Secretary of State of the United States of America.

Let me begin by saying how genuinely honoured I am to be able to participate in this meeting at the United Nations, presiding over the Security Council in our role for this period, as the Secretary of State. It is also a privilege to preside over a meeting of the Security Council on a subject — a challenge — that is central to the mission of this vital Organization, that is, realizing the promise of peace.

For far, far too long, far too many lives in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the broader Great Lakes region have been ravaged by targeted, grotesque violence. They have been subjected to human rights abuses, and the region has been disrupted by dangerous instability.

The crisis that we are witnessing today underscores what we already know: it is a stark reminder of what fills the vacuum in the absence of good governance, basic dignity and firm leadership that holds accountable those who violate basic standards of decency.

It reminds — or it ought to remind — all of us of an obligation that we all share: not only to end the killing,

the raping, the forcing of children into combat, the devastation and the fear, but the obligation to establish a lasting peace and a climate of development. In doing so, we can create the space for productivity and partnerships, for greater opportunity for the citizens of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and for the birth of a new generation of stability and of hope.

We can actually prove to the world that all of us working together — and, I might add, prove it at a time when many people are doubting the capacity of institutions to function and the capacity of political leadership to solve problems — have the ability to prove to the world that together, we actually can make a difference.

The seeds of that promise have already been planted. But our job does not end with the creation of the Framework. It continues in the cultivation of the seeds and in making sure that we implement the Framework and that we create a vigilant, accountable and cooperative effort in order to see those seeds grow into a full-blown peace that is sustainable.

I want to recognize our partners in that effort. First, I thank the Secretary-General for his personal engagement. I thank World Bank President Kim for the same kind of engagement and for their partnership. President Obama and I are grateful to both leaders and the institutions that they lead for the very novel United Nations-World Bank partnership that has been created which provides incentives for political progress through projects that create stability and improve infrastructure. Clearly, boosting regional commerce in the short term is one path to realizing stability and security in the long term. I think that we are all very hopeful that this approach can succeed in the Great Lakes region and perhaps even serve as a model for other areas, such as Mali, the Maghreb and beyond.

Regrettably, we have no dearth of locations where we are challenged and could use this kind of model today. I would just say parenthetically that, in the Middle East, the West Bank and Palestine, we are beginning to look at a similar kind of model, and hope that we can combine our efforts over the long term to find new ways to build sustainable peace.

I want particularly to also thank Mary Robinson, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region of Africa. She is a long-time friend and somebody I have long admired, and I reiterate the United States support for her work with regional leaders in the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework. We particularly welcome the priority that she places on including regional women's groups, local communities and civil society in the Framework peace process as we seek to break the cycle of violence and break down the barriers between humanitarian aid and the people who are desperate for it.

The day before President Obama nominated me to be Secretary of State, I met with Denis Mukwege, who just a few weeks earlier had fled the Democratic Republic of the Congo after an attempt on his life. Denis has demonstrated the courage to stand up and protect women and children from the weapons of war, which too often people only talk about in a whisper. The victims of these horrific crimes and humanitarians like Dr. Mukwege, who protect and treat those people, as well as all the people of that region, desperately need a voice. I know — and the Secretary-General obviously knows, because he chose her — that Mary Robinson to being that voice as the region and the international community address the full range of issues involved in translating the broad principles of the Framework into concrete benchmarks for implementation. I thank Mary Robinson for what she is doing. We are grateful for her continued public service.

It is also a great pleasure for me today to introduce the United States Special Representative for the African Great Lakes Region and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, former Senator Russ Feingold. The suffering in the Great Lakes, which we are going to debate and talk about here today, is a high-level priority for President Obama and for me, and it is one that we believe must be met by high-level leadership. I had the pleasure of working with Senator Feingold in the United States Senate for 18 years. In my judgement, there was no one in the Senate who was more trusted for his expertise in African issues. He brings enormous intellect, passion and courage to this challenge, and I am very pleased that he has consented to take this on.

I also bring the greetings of former United States Ambassador to the United Nations Susan Rice, who has asked me to convey a warm good morning and hello. We chatted briefly before I came here so I could get the latest tips on exactly what to do and what not to do today.

The United States joins every single participant in this meeting in welcoming the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework. It is a very important first

step. But we also recognize that the progress which the region has made since February is extremely fragile, and the key question before all of us today is whether the commitments prescribed in the Framework can be and will be kept. Will they come to life, or are they destined only to live on paper?

Let me underscore that the United States stands ready to support the signatories and we will work with them, with focus, energy and persistence, in order to implement the Framework. But as President Obama has said, there has to be follow-through. I want to make it clear in that context that the United States is deeply concerned about recent reports of resumed external support to the Mouvement du 23 mars, as well as of collaboration with the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda. So I want to be emphatic here today. All parties must immediately end their support for armed rebel groups. All Governments must hold human rights violators and abusers accountable. We must end the era of impunity, which, unfortunately, has been rampant.

To this end, the United States welcomes the deployment of the Force Intervention Brigade, and we support its mandate to neutralize all armed groups and protect civilians so that peace can take hold. We believe that it is now time for everyone in the region to exercise restraint, to return to the constructive path that they have set out for themselves, and to move forward together so that we can address the root causes of the conflict and end it once and for all. I believe that this is doable. I believe that it is the absence of governance and the absence of an international presence that have created the vacuum that has permitted people to act with the impunity with which they have acted. I know that moving ahead is not easy. I know that it takes courage. But we all have to accept that this is our responsibility.

So, as President of the Council at this debate and as the representative of a nation that, like all others represented here, has a stake in the stability of the Great Lakes region, I want to urge all of us around this table to take advantage of the unique opportunity that the Framework provides. The United States respectfully challenges all of those who have committed themselves to the Framework to respect in turn the national sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We cannot emphasize strongly enough how critical it is that everyone foster cooperation across borders. We challenge everyone to finalize the benchmarks that are outlined in the Framework and to adopt them during the plenary session of the General Assembly in September. We strongly urge everyone to formally include the voices that Special Envoy Robinson has engaged — voices that have too often been excluded, particularly those of women. And we challenge the Democratic Republic of the Congo to continue implementing reforms to its security sector and to re-establish State authority, particularly in the East. Finally, we pledge to join the Security Council, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, regional Governments and the international community in doing everything in our power to achieve a comprehensive peace accord.

Every one of us here understands the complex history of suffering in the Great Lakes region, but we all have a responsibility — a universally endowed responsibility — to ensure that a history of violence is not going to be followed by a future of vengeance. The only way to properly honour the millions of lives that have been lost is through peace, and the only way to achieve that peace is for the United Nations, all of the countries of the region and all of the countries with the capacity to step up and help show the way forward.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

I give the floor to the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon.

The Secretary-General: I thank the United States for convening this debate, and Secretary of State John Kerry for presiding. His presence is testament to the importance the United States places on this issue.

Allow me also to welcome the appointment of Senator Russ Feingold as the new United States Special Representative for the African Great Lakes Region and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I wish him success in the critical months ahead and hope that he will continue to coordinately very closely with my Special Envoy, Ms. Mary Robinson.

It is now five months since the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region was signed, and four months since the Security Council adopted resolution 2098 (2013). Hopes were high that we could see an end to the large-scale cyclical violence that had ravaged eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo over the past two decades, and derailed previous peace initiatives. Peace would mean a new chance

for development and lasting security for some of the world's most sorely tested people.

I am therefore deeply concerned about the current hostilities between the Mouvement du 23 mars and the Congolese armed forces. All parties need to return as soon as possible to the Kampala talks. I have called for maximum restraint, and I urge all Framework signatories to jointly and individually respect their commitments.

The lack of mutual trust in the region has thwarted past attempts to find political solutions to the entrenched problems that continue to drive the conflict. It is vital that the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and its eastern neighbours pursue constructive dialogue.

At the national level, structural reforms within the Democratic Republic of the Congo will help address the root causes of the violence. The Government has taken initial steps towards army reform, decentralization and national dialogue. It is essential to translate those commitments into tangible results.

At the regional level, leaders must look beyond the issues that divide them and work together to define a common agenda for lasting peace and prosperity based on trade, economic cooperation and mutual respect for one another's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

The Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework provides a clear road map. My Special Envoy for the Great Lakes region will continue to support the parties to uphold the commitments that they have adhered to under the Framework. My Special Representative for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Head of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), Mr. Martin Kobler, will support the political process in the country, including support in implementing its national commitments.

The prospects for durable peace in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo remain better than they have for many years. But spoilers are active, including armed groups and militias that have shown little inclination to engage in a genuine peace process. To address that threat, we are reinforcing MONUSCO. The Force Intervention Brigade is an important tool, but it is only one part of a comprehensive approach that embraces security and development.

However, while the United Nations and the international community can do much, we depend on the Framework signatories to provide the essential foundation.

All parties must avoid renewed hostilities and achieve progress on the political track. Conflict and lawlessness in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo have crippled development and entrenched extreme poverty and suffering. There are appalling levels of brutal sexual violence. The region needs security. But for there to be lasting peace, we must also provide opportunity.

The United Nations system is committed to promoting economic development in Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Great Lakes region. Last May, during my joint visit with World Bank President Jim Yong Kim, the Bank committed an additional $1 billion for better health and education services, cross-border trade and hydroelectricity projects, giving new impetus to regional economic integration. I thank the leadership and continuing engagement and commitment of President Kim. I will work very closely with him in other areas as well, to set the model of partnership between the United Nations and the World Bank. That is central to building the trust and interdependence that are critical to the success of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework.

The current fighting in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo casts a grave shadow. But we should not allow it to deter us from our objective. It should make us even more determined to lift people from the oppression of insecurity, human rights abuses and poverty. I count on the Framework signatories to work constructively with each other and with my Special Envoy to develop benchmarks for their commitments, which will inform the strategic road map for implementation to be presented for endorsement on the margins of the General Assembly general debate in September. And I call on the international community to use all the tools at its disposal — from international criminal prosecution and sanctions regimes to development assistance.

My Special Envoy, Ms. Robinson, has described the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework as a framework of hope. I urge all signatories and the international community to keep the hope alive.

The President: I thank the Secretary-General for his statement and, once again, for his leadership.

I now give the floor to Mr. Kim.

Mr. Kim: I would like especially to thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, who is the leader of the entire multilateral system. His strong, visionary leadership on this issue is what is giving drive and impetus to our work together. We look forward to continuing to follow his lead and playing our role.

As a long-time resident of Massachusetts, I would like to thank you for your leadership over decades, Secretary Kerry. I also want to thank you for your extremely generous mentorship and support of me personally. Quite literally, I would not be in this job without your support.

I also especially want to thank the Secretary-General for appointing Mary Robinson as his Special Envoy.

For the people in the Chamber who do not know, I want to make a special point to make it clear that United States Special Representative Russ Feingold is a person who has been deeply committed to Africa. I remember warmly my years of working with Senator Feingold as he championed increased funding and support for AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria programmes. Senator Feingold is a true champion and friend of Africa.

It is an honour and a pleasure to take part in this briefing. I thank the Council for the invitation, as I recognize that our work at the World Bank Group has to be aligned with political realities at the global, regional, national and local levels. I shall focus my remarks on the development aspects of peace and security in the Great Lakes region, and outline what the World Bank Group is doing to support the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework.

As the Secretary-General noted, we visited the Great Lakes region together earlier this year. It was the first time in history that the President of the World Bank and the Secretary-General of the United Nations had travelled together on mission. The choice of our destination and the timing of our trip was not an accident. The Secretary-General's ground-breaking work and the commitment of all the countries of the region to the Framework Agreement provides all of us with an opening to end violence, secure peace and lay the foundations for more robust economic development. Those foundations will make a difference in lifting people out of poverty, creating jobs and providing access to health and education.

The Secretary-General and I delivered one message over and over during our trip, and I will repeat it now: we cannot have development without peace, and we cannot have peace without development. Conflict not only stops development, it can reverse years of development gains. The eastern provinces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo are a good example of a tragedy with an immense human cost that has gone on for far too long.

More than 3.5 million people are estimated to have died since 1998. Another 4.7 million people lost their homes. More than 2 million children cannot benefit from education due to the destruction of schools. The poverty rate is approximately 70 per cent. Overall access to economic services, including energy, is very limited. But let me also argue that long-term sustainable peace and stability will not be achieved without addressing the underlying key economic drivers of conflict and instability. Those drivers of conflict spill across the borders and therefore call for a regional approach to address issues such as insecure and insufficient access to land, population displacement and illicit exploitation in the mining of high-value minerals and timber.

Moreover, those problems are compounded by rapid population growth and a lack of economic opportunity. On our trip together, the Secretary-General and I demonstrated the commitment of the United Nations and the World Bank Group to collaborate and bring tangible benefits to the people of the Great Lakes region and to pursue peace, stability and development in a comprehensive manner within our national and regional programmes. We were heartened by the commitment of political leaders to implementing the Framework. We were also heartened by the interest in regional initiatives to promote development. That leadership is essential for the success of the Framework and for sustainable peace in the region. On our trip, we committed to increase cooperation between our institutions and with other partners, such as the European Union, the African Development Bank and the regional economic communities, to maximize the impact of our efforts.

We will strongly support the Office of the Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region and increase our collaboration with the United Nations on the ground. We will use our convening power to encourage greater investment, including from the private sector in the region. I can also announce that the World Bank Group will provide an additional

$1 billion over the next 24 months for cross-border development issues. Of that, about $500 million will be for hydroelectric power projects to increase energy access in several Great Lakes region countries, about $350 million for transport linkages and border management, and about $100 million for agriculture and rural livelihoods targeted at refugees and internally displaced persons. That is extremely important, given that the region has approximately 1 million refugees and more than 2 million internally displaced persons in a situation of protracted displacement.

I would like to add that all of our assistance will be informed by a gender perspective. We will provide additional resources for programmes to address sexual and gender-based violence, as well as assistance for basic health services for vulnerable women and children through networks of health centres. The economic empowerment of women, as well as the promotion and protection of their rights and increased voice, all have important roles in reducing violence. We will also expand our assistance for networks of regional public health laboratories to allow countries to develop and share specific expertise. That has been very successful to date. I am pleased to inform the Council that in two weeks our Board of Directors will consider the first project under the initiative, that is, the Rusumo Falls hydroelectric dam.

I am sure that progress in the areas just mentioned will create significant economic opportunities and help to generate jobs. I am convinced that the regional approaches outlined will help to promote greater cooperation and integration within the region and bring tangible benefits to all Great Lakes countries.

We are under no illusion that this support will be enough. Our assistance fits into a larger mosaic of development for the region and will focus on leveraging private-sector investment. We also understand that, while large energy projects will be critical for the long-term development of the region, we also need to move as rapidly and as efficiently as possible with smaller projects so that the people of the region feel the tangible benefits of peace. Indeed, in coming months, delivering on our promises related to agriculture, jobs, cross-border trading, education and health care will help determine whether those efforts will succeed. We must deliver on our promises, and we must move with as much urgency as we can.

All that work will stem not from the priorities made in the World Bank Group headquarters in Washington, D.C., or the United Nations Headquarters in New York. It will be guided by the priorities set by African stakeholders, and their emphasis on both quick wins and medium- to longer-term results. I am pleased that, last week, we were able to co-host a meeting on regional approaches to development in the Great Lakes countries with the African Union Commission and the United Nations to further this agenda. At the meeting, participants agreed on the importance of those approaches. They also agreed to collaborate immediately on several steps, including a mapping of country priorities and partner assistance, as well as to establish an accountability and follow-up mechanism. A report of the meeting will be presented to the 11+4 summit in September.

Finally, when the Secretary-General and I travelled to the HEAL Africa's hospital in Goma, to visit women who have suffered from the violence, and the health-care workers who care for them, we heard many painful stories. Those women's stories must be heard and must be remembered. Their words should steel us for difficulties that are sure to come, and harden our commitment to the Framework agreement, because we must not let this continue. What happened to those women has happened to the millions of people caught in the web of conflict in the eastern regions of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and is a stain on all of our consciences.

Outside the hospital, we also saw scores and scores of women, and even girls, holding placards with messages such as "We are tired of conflict", "We have had enough", and "Peace, peace, peace, please". I want to assure the Council, as I assured the women and girls we met, that the World Bank Group is in this for the long haul. With the Secretary-General's bold leadership, we are determined to stay the course for those women and all others who have been robbed of economic opportunity by these years of conflict. It is time for all of us to move together, to move quickly and to deliver on our promises.

The President: I thank Mr. Kim very much for his important and eloquent briefing, his creative leadership with the Secretary-General and his willingness to engage in a new partnership that we hope will be a solid model for the future.

I now give the floor to Ms. Robinson.

Ms. Robinson: I am honoured to speak to the Security Council on this important occasion. I, too, thank the United States for convening this ministerial-level meeting, and Secretary of State John Kerry for presiding and for providing a strong statement as President (S/PRST/2013/11). Let me reiterate my congratulations to Senator Russ Feingold on his appointment as the United States Special Representative for the African Great Lakes Region and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I look forward to working very closely with him. I also welcome the Secretary-General's appointment of Special Representative for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Head of United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), Mr. Martin Kobler, with whom I have established a very good working relationship.

As we have heard, this high-level meeting on the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Great Lakes takes place at a difficult time for the people in the region. The latest round of fighting in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo has had devastating consequences yet again on the civilian population, both for those living in and around Goma as well as for the host communities and Governments of the neighbouring countries. Many cases of death, injuries, sexual violence against women and massive displacements of population are still being reported. That cannot be allowed to continue. The fighting must stop immediately, and all parties should exert maximum restraint to avoid a further escalation of the conflict.

As the Council is aware, I have now served as Special Envoy for four months. Not a day goes by without reports of killings, rape, sexual assault and the displacement of people in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. The reports are in the dry prose of the code cables or the slightly more descriptive style of journalists filing their copy. What strikes me is the lack of outrage and horror at the daily toll. It has become the accepted normal. But it is not normal and not acceptable. We committed to zero-tolerance to gender-based violence. Zero-tolerance needs to be implemented as a fundamental value of the Framework for Peace, Security and Cooperation for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region. Like President Yong Kim of the World Bank, I remember the rows of people in Goma who lined the road holding pieces of paper, mainly in French, which said: "No impunity", "Peace now", "The fighting must stop". That, in essence, is the promise of the Framework, a promise of peace, security, cooperation and development.

Sadly, there are credible reports of some activities in support of armed groups by different signatory parties to the Framework, which are contrary to the spirit and intent of the Framework. As the Secretary-General said, the Force Intervention Brigade, once it becomes operative, will be an important tool with a robust mandate, but it is only one part of a comprehensive approach that embraces security and development.

The stark reality is that those who suffer the most from the endless conflict and its atrocities are, and always have been, the civilian population first, particularly women, children and even babies.

As the Secretary-General said in his remarks, hopes were high when the 11 countries and four important regional and international institutions signed the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region, on 24 February, and when the members of the Security Council adopted resolution 2098 (2013), in March. The Framework clearly gives the ownership and the responsibility to the leaders who signed it. I am personally very encouraged to see that their commitment to it is strong and resolute. If fully implemented, both the Framework and resolution 2098 (2013) would help stabilize the situation on the ground and, more importantly, would pave the way to address the fundamental causes of the cycle of conflicts in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Great Lakes.

That is why I strongly believe that the signatories and guarantors of the Framework and the international community as a whole need to work intensively together to accompany the leaders and the people of the Great Lakes to transform what I call the "framework of hope" into a tangible reality.

Despite the security and humanitarian challenges that the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Great Lakes region are facing at the moment, I am encouraged by the initial progress in several areas and by the strong will demonstrated by the signatory countries to contribute to the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework. Allow me to share some of the positive political steps that the signatories of the Framework and key international institutions have taken since February.

At the national level, in May President Kabila established the national oversight mechanism, which will oversee the implementation of the commitments of the Democratic Republic of the Congo under the Framework. I very much hope — and I made this clear to President Kabila — that the national oversight mechanism will include a large cross-section of civil society in carrying out its mandate. At the same time, national reforms that the Democratic Republic of the Congo has agreed to implement under the Framework need to begin in earnest, and be supported by the international community.

I would like to welcome the recent initiative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the International Conference of the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) to launch a mineral certification programme in an effort to stop the illegal exploitation of minerals and prevent armed groups in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo from benefiting from it. This is an important first step, which deserves the full support of the international community.

At the regional level, the first meeting of the regional oversight mechanism took place in Addis Ababa on 26 May and established a technical support committee mandated to develop the benchmarks and indicators of progress for the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework, among other tasks. The committee is made up of senior representatives of the signatory countries of the Framework, who have met twice so far, on 24 June and earlier this week on 22 and 23 July, under the co-chairmanship of my Special Adviser Modibo Touré and the African Union Special Representative for the Great Lakes, Ambassador Boubacar Diarra. Participants also included senior officials from ICGLR, the South African Development Community, MONUSCO and the United Nations Department of Political Affairs.

I am glad to report that the committee has made solid progress in developing benchmarks and indicators of progress. These may still be improved, but they are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound, with a clear indication of responsibilities. In accordance with its immediate mandate, the committee focused on regional benchmarks, but also provided critical inputs for international benchmarks and national benchmarks. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the members of the Committee and the leaders of the region who responded positively to my request to each to appoint one of their closest advisors to represent them in this work.

I will present the benchmarks developed by the committee to the leaders of the region during the next ICGLR summit, scheduled for 31 July in Nairobi ahead of the next meeting of the regional oversight mechanism, which, as the Secretary-General has said, should formally adopt them in September here in New York. In the meantime, I will of course continue consultations with all those involved in the implementation process of the Framework to ensure that the proposed benchmarks meet their concerns.

Two significant regional meetings took place recently, with positive outcomes that I would like to share. The first was the regional consultation on women, peace, security and development in the Great Lakes Region, which I organized, in collaboration with Femmes Africa Solidarité and the ICGLR, from 9 to 11 July in Bujumbura, Burundi. More than 100 women leaders from signatory countries of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework attended the conference, including the Gender Ministers of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi.

Members will recall that I made it clear from the beginning that, as Special Envoy, I intended to implement a top-down and bottom-up comprehensive approach, whereby I will be working, on the one hand, with political leaders and, on the other, with the people of the region to encourage peace, security and development. It was important to listen to the Great Lakes women's perspectives on the peace process, as women represent the majority of the population of the region and are, together with children, the first victims of the ongoing conflict. I gave them the opportunity to suggest possible benchmarks and indicators, which were later submitted to the technical support committee for consideration.

Perhaps I should explain that, not too surprisingly, the technical support committee is entirely male in its composition.

I will continue to encourage women-led initiatives in the region through the establishment of a communications platform, through which experts and donors could provide technical advice and funds to women's projects in support of the "framework of hope".

As President Kim mentioned, the second meeting took place on 18 and 19 July, in Addis Ababa. The African Union, the World Bank and my Office organized a ministerial meeting on regional approaches to development in countries of the Great Lakes in support of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework. The meeting was attended by Ministers of Finance and Economic Planning and Ministers of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of countries of the Great Lakes Region, regional economic communities, partner countries, international organizations and civil society organizations. This proved to be a very good forum for discussion, building on the historic joint visit of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and World Bank President Jim Yong Kim to the Great Lakes region in May.

Participants noted that deepened regional economic cooperation and integration and enhanced regional infrastructure and trade could foster economic inclusion and create opportunities, particularly for disadvantaged groups, women and youth, as well as strengthen political agreements by delivering tangible results. They indicated a number of priority regional interventions in energy and transport infrastructure, agriculture, cross-border trade, economic development, and social sectors. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Addis Ababa participants and also President Jim Yong Kim for his commitment of $1 billion in support of the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework, which effectively turns it into a Framework for peace, security, cooperation and development.

All these steps, although they may appear minor to the millions of people on the ground who are eagerly waiting to see peace established and their lives changing, are concrete affirmation of the determination of the international community to try new avenues for sustainable peace and stability and development in the Great Lakes region.

I will soon come back to the Council with further elements for the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework, which will be built on three critical pillars: political and security, humanitarian and development. Elements of this strategy will include sustained confidence-building measures among leaders in the region, joint efforts with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for MONUSCO and international partners to support the national dialogue process in Democratic Republic of the Congo; cross-border development projects, with a strong focus on civil society, youth and women's groups; and modalities to support difficult mediation, building on the Kampala dialogue, within the limits of my mandate, including strict compliance with international human rights and humanitarian law.

I am fully aware of the challenges that the Governments of the region and the Security Council face in advancing peace in the Great Lakes region. My role, I hope, will be a modest but catalytic contribution to helping restore peace and build hope for the future in a complex environment. But such a strategy and the Council's engagement with the Great Lakes region will bear fruit only if all actors involved at the local, national, regional and international levels push in the same direction and if — let me reiterate — there is an immediate cessation of hostilities in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo.

I believe that there is some political momentum at the moment. We need to create and encourage space for dialogue, and support for tough decisions. We need to tell each other the truth, quietly when necessary but firmly, and stick to our commitments to the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework if we are to make a real difference this time. I have been having frank conversations with the leaders of the region and I intend to continue to do so in the coming months, including next week when I meet them in Nairobi. I encourage the members of the Security Council to keep the Great Lakes region high on their agenda and to maintain the current momentum, including perhaps through a visit to the Great Lakes region in the coming months.

Let me conclude by warmly thanking the Security Council members, the Secretary-General and my United Nations colleagues, as well as regional and international partners, who have continuously expressed and provided support to my work. I know I can count on them to try to move the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework agenda forward, and I am really grateful for that.

The President: I thank the Special Envoy for her briefing and her work. I know that Special Representative Senator Feingold is really looking forward to working with her.

I now give the floor to Mr. Lamamra.

Mr. Lamamra (*spoke in French*): At the outset, on behalf of the Commisison of the African Union, I should

like to thank the President of the Security Council for the month of July, United States Secretary of State John Kerry, and the members of the Council for the invitation to take part in this important meeting on the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Great Lakes region. Ms. Dlamini-Zuma, Chair of the African Union, regrets being unable to participate in this important meeting, which takes place within discussions aimed at implementing the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region, signed in Addis Ababa on 24 February.

The first commitment undertaken by the international community concerns the role the Council is expected to play with respect to the importance of support for the long-term stability of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Great Lakes region. Furthermore, the oversight mechanism calls on the Democratic Republic of the Congo, its neighbouring countries, regional partners and the international community to synchronize their efforts to promote their respective commitments.

The Secretary-General's excellent report (S/2013/387), which is before the Council today, aptly portrays the dynamic in the region as well as the challenges it entails.

The African Union views this high-level meeting as a strong expression of the importance that the Government of the United States and other Council Member States attach to peace and security on the African continent and to achieving a swift, lasting solution to the crisis, particularly in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. That commitment is evident through the unanimous support of the members of the Council for the efforts of the Secretary-General to implement the Framework. I would note that the appointment of a Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region envisaged in the Framework has been made. In that connection, I commend the quality of the working relationship that Ms. Mary Robinson has established with Ambassador Boubacar Gaoussou Diarra, Special Representative of the African Union Commission for the Great Lakes Region. I also note and welcome the adoption of resolution 2098 (2013), which adapts the United Nation Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo(MONUSCO) to the new situation and creates the Force Intervention Brigade as requested by the countries of the region and the African Union. The African Union is grateful to South Africa, Malawi and Tanzania for their contribution to training the Brigade, which is now in the process of being deployed and operationalized.

I must point out, however, that instead of the long-awaited agreement expected to result from the negotiations that President Museveni of Uganda continues to lead with authority and perseverance, the region has been shadowed by significant military clashes between the armed forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and elements of Mouvement du 23 mars (M-23). Those confrontations have cast a harsh light on the path that lies ahead before the achievement of a new era in the region.

The statements made today by Secretary of State Kerry, the Secretary-General, Ms. Robinson and the President of the World Bank, as well as those to be delivered by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Uganda and Rwanda—all three present here today—are an important contribution to enlightening the Council with regard to the political, security and humanitarian situation on the ground, as well as on the status of the implementation of both the Framework and resolution 2098 (2013), as well as on the political process currently under way. That portrayal of the realities on the ground, the issues at stake and the perspectives for the future makes more clear than ever the urgency and need for greater, sustained support from the international community in the Great Lakes region.

In that context, Ms. Robinson and Ambassador Diarra are working together to create the conditions for the efficient and systematic implementation of the Framework. I know that the Congolese authorities and the authorities of the States party to the regional oversight mechanism have expressed their firm determination to fulfil the commitments they have made, to which they are attached. I also know that the support of the entire international community for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the countries of the region will be unwavering, as we can tell from the initiatives undertaken by the United Nations as well as by international financial institutions and other development partners. The recent consultative meeting on development approaches in the countries of the Great Lakes region organized in Addis Ababa by the United Nations and the World Bank is an integral part of that commitment.

The African Union believes that the dynamic set in motion by the Framework and by resolution 2098 (2013) paves the way for the kind of new horizons for peace, security and development that the region so desperately needs, within a favourable regional and international context. The diligence with which the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo has established the national oversight mechanism and the national consultations that have been launched augur well. At the regional level, the ongoing mobilization of the authorities of the countries of the Great Lakes region and the concurrent mobilization of the Southern African Development Community also bears witness to their shared determination to put an end to instability in order to devote their resources and energy to development and integration. The upcoming summit of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), to be held on 31 July in Nairobi, which will be devoted to issues of peace and to monitoring the implementation of the Framework, should be able to account for all the attempts and to undertake the necessary joint action towards the region's full realization of its potential.

This meeting of the Council, coming in the wake of the inaugural meeting of the 11+4 mechanism, co-chaired by the Secretary-General and the Chair of the African Union on 26 May in Addis Ababa, is a timely harbinger of a qualitatively different stage in the international community's collective effort on behalf of the people and countries of the region. The African Union welcomes that initiative and reaffirms its commitment to play its full part in that welcome effort to enhance peace, security, democracy and development in the entire Great Lakes region.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Uganda.

Mr. Kutesa (Uganda): At the outset, I congratulate you, Mr. President, and the United States delegation on your leadership of the Security Council this month. I would also like to thank you, Sir, for organizing and presiding over this important and timely debate on the situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Great Lakes region. I also thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, Special Envoy Mary Robinson, World Bank President Jim Yong Kim and Mr. Ramtane Lamamra, Commissioner for Peace and Security of the African Union, for their statements.

This debate is taking place at a time when eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo is in deep crisis again. The presence of a multiplicity of foreign and local armed groups — including the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda, the Forces nationales de libération, Mouvement du 23 mars (M-23) and Mayi Mayi militias — has exacerbated insecurity in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region.

Within the framework of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), the region has been involved in efforts to find a peaceful solution to instability in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, through both political and military approaches. We are convinced that the political process should be at the forefront of our efforts, with peace enforcement measures complementing it. It was in this context that the Great Lakes region conceived the neutral international force, which the Security Council then turned into the Force Intervention Brigade. In that regard, Uganda welcomed the statement of the Secretary-General of 18 July, in which he underscored

> "the importance of pursuing a political solution to address the root causes of conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo".

We are also encouraged by the approach taken by Mary Robinson, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region of Africa, and appreciate her engagement in the political process, including the Kampala peace talks. President Yoweri Museveni, in his capacity as Chairman of the ICGLR, has convened five extraordinary summits, including four in Kampala, aimed at finding a lasting solution to recurrent conflicts in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. The sixth summit is due to take place in Nairobi on 31 July.

These extraordinary summits were instrumental in de-escalating the situation in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo last year, and in launching the talks in Kampala between the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the M-23, facilitated by my colleagues Crispus Kiyonga, Uganda's Minister of Defence, who is with me in this Chamber today. We believe that the Kampala talks between the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the M-23 provide the best opportunity for resolving their differences. The political engagement of the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the M-23 must be given priority in the search for a durable and peaceful solution.

The successful conclusion of these talks will no doubt make a positive contribution to the national consultations due to start in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We are glad to inform the Council that since December 2012, the talks have seen some progress, with two key milestones. First, both parties reviewed the peace agreement of 2009 between the Government and the Congrès national pour la défense du peuple and agreed on the status of its implementation, which was a significant step in building confidence. Secondly, both parties presented draft peace agreements in March, consolidating them into one draft that is currently in its second revision and subject to further negotiation.

While these developments are commendable, renewed fighting raises serious concern over their commitment to the talks. We call upon the Security Council and its partners to encourage the parties to expedite and speedily conclude the Kampala peace talks. We also call on the international community to provide logistical and financial support to ICGLR mechanisms, such as the Joint Intelligence Fusion Centre and the Expanded Joint Verification Mechanism.

Renewed fighting between the Congolese armed forces and the M-23 is a major concern for the region and the international community. Meanwhile, atrocities committed by the Allied Democratic Forces, which have links with Al-Shabaab, have grown in frequency and intensity since the beginning of July. Over the past three weeks, the ADF attacked Kangbayi prison, captured Kamango town and ambushed a convoy of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. These attacks caused an influx of over 66,000 Congolese refugees into Uganda. The humanitarian situation in the region remains a matter of grave concern, as insecurity caused by armed groups has led to large-scale displacements of people.

While we deplore and condemn these attacks by the ADF and other armed groups, these serve as a grim reminder of the real challenges faced by the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region. Uganda is particularly concerned about the possibility of an imminent attack by the ADF from the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It is our expectation that the new mechanism, combined with security sector reform in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, will give it the requisite capacity to deter foreign armed groups from occupying and using its territory to destabilize neighbouring countries.

We consider the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region to be a unique and important milestone towards addressing challenges in the country and the region. In our view, the following three elements of the Framework are crucial. First, the Framework recognizes a holistic approach the as best way to end instability. Secondly, the Framework outlines commitments and actions at the national, regional and international levels, the implementation of which should be the main focus. Thirdly and most importantly, it emphasizes partnerships and collective efforts among the United Nations, the African Union, the ICGLR and the Southern African Development Community.

We therefore reiterate and underscore the need for the expeditious implementation of the commitments under the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework by the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Great Lakes region and the international community. Uganda is committed to playing its part. It is our experience that regional-led initiatives, with the support of the international community, have yielded better results on the African continent.

We underscore the need to focus on the nexus between peace and development in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. It is important to support regional initiatives in key areas such as infrastructure, energy, trade and agriculture, as both the Secretary-General and the President of the World Bank Group have emphasized. In that regard, Uganda welcomed the visit of the Secretary-General and the President of the World Bank to the Great Lakes region in May, and the pledges they made.

In conclusion, for many years now Uganda and the region have called for concerted efforts to address the root causes of conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We have also called for support to the Government to help it effectively exercise authority over all of its territories as a way of dealing with armed groups that have been destabilizing the country and region. Now is the time to redouble our resolve and efforts to effectively address the root causes of the conflicts in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo in a comprehensive manner. The forthcoming extraordinary ICGLR summit, to be held in Nairobi, will review the situation in the country and the region, as well as actions being undertaken, and make specific recommendations to consolidate our efforts.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Mr. Tshibanda N'tungamulongo (Democratic Republic of the Congo) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I would like to sincerely congratulate you, Sir, on your appointment as Secretary of State of the United States of America. I also convey the pleasure of the Democratic Republic of the Congo at seeing you preside over the Security Council at this critical moment in its history and to thank you for having taken the initiative to organize this special meeting of the Council on the Great Lakes region, which for some years now has been prey to cyclical rebellions that have been incontrovertibly shown to bear the same genetic imprint and to be characterized by massive human rights violations, summary and extrajudicial executions, the drafting of child soldiers, sexual violence and rape, the pillaging of private and public assets, and the illegal exploitation of natural resources.

By choosing to talk about the Democratic Republic of the Congo at this specific moment, you have borne witness to the importance that the Government of the United States of America and the Security Council attach to a return to lasting peace in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and the entire region.

I would also like to take the opportunity to thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his personal involvement in the negotiation, conclusion and implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region, concluded in Addis Ababa on 24 February. The Framework Agreement and its supporting resolution 2098 (2013) represent major innovations in both the understanding of the crisis that has affected the Great Lakes region since the second half of the 1990s, and of United Nations traditional peacekeeping doctrine.

The long-suffering populations of the countries of the region consider the Framework Agreement and the aforementioned resolution to be compelling evidence of the international community's determination to help to find a sustainable solution to the instability that has lasted far too long and for which my country in particular has paid a heavy toll. The same is true with respect to the recent joint visit to the region by the Secretary-General, the President of the World Bank and Ms. Mary Robinson, as well as the recent appointments of Mr. Kobler as Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Senator Feingold as United States Special Representative for the Great Lakes Region and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

It is a sad, often overlooked reality that, because of the ongoing conflict, my country has lost over 6 million souls. The scale of the tragedy has no equal in the history of humankind, and to face it with indifference would risk the loss of our collective soul. Today's meeting forms part of the mutual effort to reaffirm our humanity and to evaluate frankly and together the implementation of the commitments made, with a view to ending the tragedy in accordance with the important Framework Agreement of 24 February and to identify the remaining challenges so that, once peace is restored once and for all, the region can devote its energy and intelligence to the critical issues of fighting poverty and improving the living conditions of the people.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo is determined to shoulder its responsibility to ensure the rapid restoration of peace and harmony in the region. As proof, the day after signing the Framework Agreement, the Congolese Government set out to fulfil its obligations, which, incidentally, correspond to the priority tasks identified 11 years ago. In that context, we have not only accelerated security sector reform, but promoted its institutionalization. The consolidation of the infrastructure and personnel of the army, security services and police; recruitment in the defence forces of young Congolese from all provinces of the country; the reopening of military academies; and the training, with the assistance of bilateral partners, of special forces and support units, with the primary aim of the operationalizing the rapid reaction force are some of the concrete actions recently undertaken with the goal of creating professional and disciplined security and defence forces that respect human rights in order to more effectively defend our territory and bolster State authority.

In order to strengthen that authority, especially in the eastern part of the Republic, starting with Goma, the national police, public administration and courts have benefitted from prioritized capacity strengthening, which has enabled the gradual resumption of control of the situation. Decentralization, which is provided for in the Constitution, is another step closer to realization with the adoption of the necessary implementation laws.

The positive results achieved in reforming public finance administration over the past few years are evident in the continued stability of the macroeconomic framework, which has just been usefully supplemented by the implementation of measures to enhance the business climate and the national mineral resources certification scheme. This will effectively strengthen economic growth, which nevertheless is already one of the highest in the continent and has been consistently so for nearly 10 years. Better still, the Government has just undertaken a thorough review of the poverty reduction strategy paper with a view to more inclusive growth, reversing the time lost in efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and ensuring greater credibility and effectiveness in the fight against poverty.

On the political front, reconciliation and strengthening national unity are more than ever on the daily agenda. Thus, the national oversight mechanism on the implementation of the Framework Agreement has been entrusted to a competent and experienced individual from the political opposition. The Independent National Electoral Commission has been completely reformed and a new, more seasoned and more inclusive team has just assumed leadership of that important institution supporting democracy. The new Commission has already mastered its task and prioritized the preparation of the electoral process with a view to organizing, in the best possible conditions, local, municipal, provincial, senatorial and provincial gubernatorial elections.

Moreover, upon the initiative of the President of the Republic, national consultations are to begin in August. Their purpose is to endeavour together to find ways and means to enhance national unity in order to better cope with all of the challenges facing the Congolese nation. In an effort to be inclusive, the forum will gather together, in addition to national and provincial political institutions, political parties of all persuasions, civil society in all its diversity, and a significant representation of women and youth. Its preparation and administration has been entrusted to a presidium consisting of the President of the Senate — a leader well known to the opposition, on whose behalf he was elected to his post — and the President of the National Assembly, a functionary of the presidential majority.

As proof of the presidium's participatory nature, the political opposition has recently prepared and filed with the presidium and with the President of the Republic a list of demands and proposals to be addressed in the forum. For each of those reforms, as for all other tasks of the Democratic Republic of the Congo under the Framework Agreement, the terms of reference or benchmarks have been or are being developed and communications related to the matter are under way with Ms. Mary Robinson and her team, to whom we reaffirm our support and cooperation. We will therefore be ready for the next meeting of the regional oversight mechanism set to take place on the sidelines of the next session of the General Assembly, right here, in September.

While we are gathered here, the people of Goma and Rutshuru are again living in fear and uncertainty because of sporadic attacks carried out since the adoption of resolution 2098 (2013). In defiance of the latter, the Mouvement du 23 mars (M-23) has launched attacks on the defensive positions of the Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo (FARDC).

To conceal its inconsistent peaceful gesture, that negative force is attempting to justify its crimes through baseless accusations to discredit the FARDC, the Force Intervention Brigade and the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) by stating without proof that they are collaborating with the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR). United Nations officials have already responded to these accusations.

For its part, the Democratic Republic of Congo has categorically denied those allegations. It has sent its response to the President of the Security Council, with a request that it be distributed to all members of the Council as an official document of the Security Council. Careful examination of the documentation that we have provided eloquently demonstrates the policy of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in that area, as well as the scope, quality and effectiveness of its efforts in the past five years to fight the FDLR, which it would have completely neutralized had it not been for the outbreak of the M-23 rebellion.

It should be noted that this positive assessment has been certified by non-Congolese experts, who could hardly be accused of complacency in that regard, namely, MONUSCO and, most especially, those very people who, today, by their accusations, seem to have repudiated their own signatures.

It also should be noted that no country of the Great Lakes region has advocated as hard as the Democratic Republic of the Congo for the creation of the Force Intervention Brigade, whose task is to neutralize all negative elements, including the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda, and for the Brigade to be granted an offensive mandate.

It should be understood that the Democratic Republic of Congo, whose population suffers more than any other from the presence of foreign armed groups on its territory, cannot maintain any collaboration whatsoever with such groups, whose specialties include murder, rape, all kinds of abuses, and the looting of public and private property and natural resources. Any such collaboration, if substantiated, would represent instances of independent action on the ground, and the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo would unequivocally condemn them and stands ready to unflinchingly punish them.

I take this opportunity to solemnly reaffirm that the Democratic Republic of the Congo has never waivered from respecting and will continue to scrupulously respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of other States of the region and the sacrosanct principle of non-interference in their internal affairs.

With regard to the involvement of certain elements of the Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo (FARDC) in human rights violations in Minova, this case is being dealt with by the justice system and any FARDC members whose guilt is established will be severely punished, regardless of their rank. As for recent allegations of the mistreatment of prisoners, inhumane and degrading treatment, and the desecration of the dead, investigations have just been launched to establish the truth. Justice will be equally merciless for the perpetrators of these acts, if confirmed. It should nevertheless be underscored, with regard to these allegations, that they are, to say they least, surprising, because, while such human rights violations are known to have been committed by the leaders of rebels groups that were forerunners of the Mouvement du 23 mars (M-23), this is the first time in 15 years of struggle against various rebellions that regular army of the Democratic Republic of the Congo has been the subject of such accusations. That has something to say about their credibility.

As is clear, the Democratic Republic of Congo is significantly advanced in the implementation of its commitments. It is therefore legitimate for us to expect that other regional and international partners will make the same effort.

The deployment on the ground of the Intervention Brigade established under resolution 2098 (2013) represents undeniable progress, which we fully appreciate. Our aim now is to see the Brigade assume, as quickly and efficiently as possible, the responsibilities entrusted to it by the Security Council, which include monitoring and securing the border between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and its neighbours to the East on the one hand and, on the other hand, neutralizing all negative forces, without exception.

That said, we recognize that military force cannot alone solve the complex equation of peace in the Great Lakes region of Africa, where the causes of conflicts and disputes are interlinked, as well as home-grown and external alike. In the light of the extremism of virtually all of these negative elements, force is necessary, but not sufficient. To be sustainable, the solution must also involve sincere dialogue among all internal and external parties and the exhibition of good faith when it comes to the conclusions reached these parties.

That is why, for our part, the Democratic Republic of the Congo will remain actively involved in the Kampala talks, facilitated by Uganda in its capacity as current Chair of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR). However, we wish to emphasize that, based on our experience of the agreements reached in 2003, 2006 and 2009 with the rebels— most of whom are now part of the M-23 — and in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the Security Council, we are not ready to sign an agreement that endorses impunity and reintegrates into the armed forces persons subject to prosecution or international sanctions due to mass violations of human rights, war crimes, crimes of genocide or crimes against humanity, as this would lay the foundation of a new breach of peace and sow the seeds of instability.

To conclude, whatever the scars and horrors of the suffering of the past, of which we are all aware and which none of us would seek to understate, we cannot lock us forever into a stance whereby no compromise is possible. Without forgetting the past, we must focus on reconciliation and cohesion within our States and peaceful coexistence and cooperation between our States. History and geography requires us to do so; survival and sustainable development demand it.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo will never surrender a square inch of its territory or any part of its sovereignty over its wealth. But it remains ready, today as yesterday, to agree on a pact for peace, stability and development throughout the Great Lakes region and, in this context, to develop regional cooperation. Others before us, in other regions, have lived through challenges similar to those facing our region. And they found a way, without forgetting anything, to renounce the reckless thirst for revenge. Their prosperity and ongoing entente cordiale should inspire us.

The peoples of the Great Lakes region of Africa have, like those elsewhere throughout the world, the right to peace and prosperity. In reiterating my congratulations and thanks, I beg you to believe, Sir, in the inexhaustible determination of His Excellency Mr. Joseph Kabila Kabange, President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, to work towards a lasting peace in the Great Lakes region, together with the Council, the Secretary-General, his counterparts in the ICGLR and the Southern African Development Community, and all our other bilateral and multilateral partners.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Rwanda.

Ms. Mushikiwabo (Rwanda): Let me begin by thanking the United States and, you, Sir, for having convened this most important debate in support of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework, and for the presidential statement (S/PRST/2013/11) just adopted.

Allow me also to thank the Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, for his informative briefing, and the President of the World Bank, Mr. Jim Yong Kim, and the Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region of Africa, Ms. Mary Robinson, for their valued contributions and statements this morning. Taken together, their extraordinary efforts, exhausting travel schedules and financial commitments to regional development priorities amply demonstrate their sincere commitment to the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework that we are discussing this morning. It is a visionary, comprehensive and inclusive strategy to end decades of conflict and instability in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. I also thank African Union Commissioner Ramtane Lamamra for his revealing briefing on regional efforts undertaken towards finding peace in the Great Lakes region.

I also acknowledge the presence of honourable Ministers from countries of our region and from fellow Council members.

Rwanda warmly welcomes the new United States Special Representative for the African Great Lakes Region and the Democratic Republic of the Congo Mr. Russ Feingold, and the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General and new Force Commander of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO). I wish to assure all of them, as a team, of Rwanda's full cooperation in the common pursuit of peace for our region.

While Rwanda is very pleased to support the presidential statement, we nonetheless would have loved to see efforts of the region included in it, in particular in support of the Kampala peace talks established under the auspices of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region. Indeed, we would like the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, Ms. Mary Robinson, to play an active role in seeing through the Kampala talks without any further delay so that we can move quickly to pacify the Kivu region. Her engagement would be a welcome and helpful contribution to moving forward.

We have gathered today out of a shared determination to make peace in the Great Lakes region a lasting reality. Having endured devastating conflict within our own borders nearly two decades ago, the people of Rwanda have worked tirelessly to rebuild a peaceful and thriving nation, but we are also very aware that our destiny is inextricably tied to that of our neighbours. Let me put it in the clearest possible terms: in order to secure long-term peace and prosperity for Rwanda well into the future, we need a peaceful and prosperous Democratic Republic of the Congo. As long as conditions persist that allow more than 30 rebel groups to roam in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo with impunity, or as long as men and boys see nothing in their futures beyond crime, violence and conflict, such a transformation will remain beyond reach.

The Framework of hope, along with regional peace efforts, opens a special door to the kind of profound and necessary change that is needed for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and for the region as whole. Rwanda is eager to do its part and to live up to our commitments as a neighbour and regional partner, as well as through the Framework of hope.

Allow me to lay out some concrete actions that my Government has taken so far in implementing the Framework.

We have disarmed, interned and relocated away from our border with the Democratic Republic of the Congo more than 600 combatants of the Mouvement du 23 mars (M-23) who had crossed into Rwanda as a result of infighting in March. In his report dated 28 June (S/2013/387), the Secretary-General commended Rwanda for the positive role it played in that regard. We have asked the United Nations to take responsibility for those combatants. It is important to note that Rwanda cannot bear that burden alone. We invite the international community to devise and implement a long-term solution for that group of former combatants.

Rwanda has also worked with the United Nations to accommodate approximately 70,000 Congolese nationals who have sought refuge in Rwanda for more than 13 years now, and to take the necessary steps to ensure their safe return home as soon as possible. In addition, as the Secretary-General mentioned in his report on the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework, the Government of Rwanda reported the presence of several high-ranking M-23 members who had crossed the border from the Democratic Republic of Congo to seek refuge in Rwanda, including individuals sanctioned by the United Nations. When M-23 leader General Bosco Ntaganda surrendered to the Embassy of the United States in Kigali on 18 March, Rwandan authorities offered to facilitate his transfer to The Hague through the United States and Dutch Embassies in Kigali.

We can all agree that the economic components of the Framework must be implemented alongside its political and security aspects. To that end, Rwanda is working to boost regional cooperation through enhanced economic integration and close collaboration on cross-border trade with the Democratic Republic of the Congo and our other neighbours in the Great Lakes region. Just last month, Rwandan mining authorities seized 8.4 metric tons of smuggled minerals. They are now in the process of returning them to the authorities of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as has been our practice in the past. We are also exploring several other opportunities for economic cooperation, including a strategic bilateral project with the Democratic Republic of the Congo on our shared Lake Kivu.

Finally, Rwanda supported and has been facilitating the deployment of the Intervention Brigade. We have done so because we believe that it could help pacify the region and serve as a strong deterrent against the multiple armed groups in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, thereby allowing MONUSCO to carry out its responsibility to protect civilians and, critically, create the space necessary to implement the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework and facilitate other regional peace efforts.

As Special Envoy Robinson has stressed in the past, the Framework is a shared endeavour, and its success depends very much on each party living up to its respective commitments. I would take the opportunity afforded by today's meeting in this Chamber to reiterate Rwanda's commitment to the Framework. Rwanda is one of the 11 countries that makes up the expanded joint verification mechanism, by which developments in conflict-affected areas are examined thoroughly and with transparency and accountability. We therefore urge the Security Council to attach value to the work of the mechanism, so that its findings can inform the decisions we reach and the resolutions we agree to.

On the recent collusion between the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR) and the Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo (FARDC), Rwanda remains seriously concerned. The Security Council has received a letter from my Government that includes details on that issue, so I will not repeat the specifics here today. I would simply like to say that it is a concern that needs to be addressed. However, while Rwanda views any alliance between the FDLR and FARDC as a threat to regional security, we will not allow those disturbing developments to derail our commitments to peace, as we have done in the past.

I cannot stress enough Rwanda's goodwill and ongoing support for the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework. We believe it offers a realistic path to lasting peace and security for the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Great Lakes region at large. But we must not veer off course and we must understand that that vision is only achievable alongside regional peace initiatives and a showing of genuine political will on the part of all affected States.

Furthermore, the international peacekeeping force in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is entering unchartered territory with the deployment of an Intervention Brigade and unmanned aerial vehicles.

United Nations peacekeepers must take great care to respect all the relevant international laws and adhere strictly to their mandate.

Since the consequences of instability in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo fall so heavily on Rwanda, as has been the case during almost the whole of the past 20 years, we are eager to take full advantage of the historic opportunity for peace and security before us. Despite the serious risks I have outlined, we can see early and unmistakable signs of progress.

A plan without action is just words, and when it comes to the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, there have been enough words. There have been enough speeches made and reports written. And there has been more than enough grandstanding, especially by unaccountable actors who seek profit and publicity from the region's misery. It is time for such forces to move aside and allow the Framework of hope to move forward. This is the time for accountable parties to stand up and step forward. Now is the time for action.

Mr. Asselborn (Luxembourg) (*spoke in French*): Luxembourg welcomes the initiative of the United States in organizing this Security Council debate on the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Great Lakes region. The moment is particularly significant, and your presence, Mr. Secretary, lends it special weight.

I thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, his Special Envoy, Ms. Mary Robinson, the President of the World Bank, Mr. Kim and the Commissioner for Peace and Security of the African Union, Mr. Lamamra, as well as the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda, for their statements. I thank them especially for their sincere commitment to the cause of peace, security and cooperation in the region.

Luxembourg fully subscribes to the statement to be delivered by Mr. Pierre Vimont on behalf of the European Union.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Great Lakes region have for too long been ravaged by conflict. Millions have died — the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Democratic Republic of the Congo just cited a figure of 6 million deaths over the past 15 years. Millions have been displaced and millions prevented from living in dignity. And armed groups, notably the Mouvement du 23 mars, continue to plague the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo.

This is no longer acceptable. Things must change. We must break the cycle of violence. The Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework signed in the 11+4 format in Addis Ababa on 24 February marks, we sincerely hope, a defining turning point in the consolidation of peace and stability in the region. That agreement would not have been possible or its follow-up assured without the support of the United Nations. I commend the crucial role played in that regard by the Secretary-General and his team. And we should also praise the support that has been provided by the African Union, the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region and the Southern African Development Community.

The Framework has one essential merit — it takes into account the root causes of conflict. It rightly emphasizes ownership by the countries of the region of a process that must end the recurring violence and pave the way for truly dynamic regional economic development. We hope it will live up to the name given it by Mary Robinson, inspired by the Irish poet Seamus Heaney — a framework of hope, a framework that can bring hope back to the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region and erase the memory of what Ms. Robinson just described as a lack of horror at what is going on right now.

It is time for the Framework to be resolutely implemented. In this context, we welcome the recent initiatives of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The national oversight mechanism for monitoring implementation of the commitments made under the Framework is in place. The first national plans for security sector reform, particularly of the army, have been laid out. We also welcome the establishment of a new Independent National Electoral Commission, which paves the way for organizing provincial and local elections. A professional and loyal national army that can protect the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and promote human rights is also an imperative.

In that regard, it is incumbent on the country's authorities to continue their investigations into violations of international humanitarian law and human rights, including sexual violence, committed by elements of the Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo. The focused implementation of the action plan signed on 4 October 2012 with the

United Nations, aimed at halting and preventing the recruitment and exploitation of children, and the use of sexual violence against them, by the military ansd security forces, must be seen in the same context.

We should recall that the signing of the Framework was accompanied by an overhaul of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), including by the establishment of the Force Intervention Brigade. The deterrent effect of the Brigade has already been felt on the ground, and we welcome that. In line with resolution 2098 (2013), the Brigade will have a key role to play in helping to achieve the goal of reducing the threat that armed groups pose to the authority of the State and the safety of civilians in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. In general, support for security sector reform and the protection of civilians, especially women and children, must remain at the heart of MONUSCO's mandate.

At the regional level, we support Special Envoy Robinson's proactive approach and her intention to design a comprehensive political strategy for implementation of the Framework in the coming months, based on indicators agreed on by all signatories. We will have to remain vigilant to sustain positive momentum. The follow-up orchestrated by Ms. Robinson needs the benefit of the Council's continued attention.

One issue we are particularly concerned about is the ongoing illegal exploitation of and trafficking in natural resources in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, particularly by armed groups; it is a major source of instability. We welcome the positive steps taken by the Congolese authorities in the area. In general, we encourage them to redouble their efforts in the area of economic governance. As the Framework states, regional cooperation must be strengthened, including through deepening economic integration, with special attention to the issue of the exploitation of natural resources.

Lastly, I would like to stress how important it is that the partners of the region focus on cooperation on development and combating poverty. Indeed, security and development go hand in hand. I encourage the World Bank and the countries of the region to move forward speedily with projects that support regional development priorities, in the wake of President Kim's announcement in Kinshasa on 23 May of a pledge of $1 billion in zero-interest loans. I am thinking in particular of projects in the areas of agriculture, hydroelectric power and infrastructure, which can enable cross-border economic activity to expand. As Ms. Robinson emphasized, the ongoing political process can succeed only if people benefit quickly from tangible peace dividends.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate the call to the signatories of the Framework to implement, diligently and in good faith, all the commitments they have undertaken, including the commitment not to tolerate or provide assistance or support of any kind to armed groups. This is a matter of responsibility and credibility. In doing that, they can count on the support of the international community in initiating a virtuous circle that will enable the people of the region to at last emerge from an unacceptable situation that has lasted all too long. The opportunity is exceptional. The time to seize it is now.

Mr. Carrera (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): Thirteen years have passed since the United Nations first established a peacekeeping operation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. My own country has participated in that Mission as a troop contributor since 2005; in fact, we lost eight troops in a well-known incident in Garamba National Park in January 2006. I would like to honour their memory by reciting their names here: Abelino Pop, Ramón Xi Che, Edgar Morales Guzmán, Valeriano Rax Hul, Calixto Gómez Pérez, Mario Enrique Tee Caal, Teodoro Tilom Paau, and Orlando Augusto Hernandez Alonzo. Five of those soldiers were Guatemalans of Mayan descent — Mayans fighting for peace and security in the Great Lakes region.

In spite of this long history, the signing on 24 February of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region has opened the possibility of injecting renewed momentum into the efforts to achieve peace, stability and prosperity in the Great Lakes region in general and the Democratic Republic of the Congo in particular. For that reason today's debate is timely and relevant, and for that we are grateful to the delegation of the United States, and in particular to Secretary of State Kerry, for proposing it and for circulating the concept note on the matter (S/2013/394, annex). We also appreciate the gesture of Secretary Kerry of personally presiding over today's meeting.

We also greatly value the presence of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and President of the World Bank Jim Yong Kim, and we would like to thank them for their presentations. We also appreciate the briefings of Ms. Mary Robinson, United Nations Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region, and the Commissioner for Peace and Security of the African Union.

The report of the Secretary-General (S/2013/387), which serves as a background document to this meeting, refers to the relatively encouraging expectations that exist today that the protracted crisis in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, especially in the eastern part of the country can, be resolved in the broader context that shapes the future of the Great Lakes region. Despite the many obstacles to be overcome, which the report also openly describes, we agree with the assessment of the Secretary-General and with the words of Special Envoy Robinson. I would like to underscore some of the elements that undergird our cautious optimism.

First, although the Framework for Peace, Security and Cooperation for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region involves commitments both for the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and for the other countries of the region, as well as for the international community, it is clear that the primary responsibility falls on the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as it should. That model, with the host country serving as the main protagonist and the international community in a complementary role, has emerged as a paradigm of development in recent times, in particular since the Paris Declaration.

Secondly, the commitment to address the root causes of the conflict in a comprehensive and holistic manner, including the economic, social, political, governance and security issues, also appears to be essential if we are to restore stability and overcome the violence that afflicts the country.

Thirdly, it is encouraging to see the presence of 11 countries and four multilateral institutions involved in the Framework for Peace, Security and Cooperation. It is our view that the establishment of the so-called 11+4 oversight mechanism shores up expectations that commitments undertaken by all parties will be met.

Fourthly, we commend the partnerships that the United Nations has built with the regional and subregional entities of the African continent, in this case with the African Union, the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region and the Southern African Development Community. We consider the synchronized and cooperative work of the multilateral entities, each with its own specific purview, to be of special importance.

Fifthly, along the same lines, we commend the joint initiative of the Secretary-General and the President of the World Bank to undertake a joint mission to the Great Lakes region and to appear together again before us. It is difficult to conceive of economic and social progress without the involvement of multilateral financial institutions. We are pleased that, in addressing the problems in a holistic and comprehensive manner, we are assigning the duties to be addressed, not only within the United Nations, according to the speciality of each entity, but also within the United Nations system and between the latter and other multilateral bodies. We also continue to hope that the new manifestation of cooperation between the United Nations and the World Bank will extend to the agendas of the Economic and Social Council, the Peacebuilding Commission and the General Assembly. We see the World Bank as not only the financial arm of development, but also the financial arm of peace.

Sixthly, as is known, my delegation has expressed its reservations about the new trend of the Council to assign peace-enforcement duties to missions conceived under the cardinal principles that have shaped our peacekeeping operations, including especially the principle of impartiality. However, in spite of those reservations, ultimately we accepted the incorporation of the so-called Intervention Brigade into the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo as the lesser of two evils, given the imminent threat to the civilian population by the Mouvement du 23 mars and other militant groups in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, and with the understanding that this would be a stop-gap measure. In any case, it is important to not forget that State-building, democracy building or even more so with regard to nation building is not a job for the international community; it is the job of sovereign States.

In conclusion, I would like to refer to the fact that, just a month ago, we met here in the Chamber to adopt resolution 2106 (2013), on sexual violence against women and children in armed conflict (see S/PV.6984). In line with resolution 2098 (2013), that meeting, which was held under the presidency of the United Kingdom,

was fundamental. We should not forget the words expressed then, which would serve as a guide for peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

I hope that we are now on the path towards peace and that we will continue advancing towards the prosperity and development of a region that truly needs it.

Mr. Canfin (*spoke in French*): Allow me, on behalf of France, to warmly thank Secretary of State John Kerry for having undertaken the initiative to convene this high-level meeting on the situation in the Great Lakes region, in particular on the Democratic Republic of the Congo. As others have said, this is a timely meeting as the humanitarian situation continues to be tragic, with more than 2.5 million displaced persons in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and 450,000 refugees in neighbouring countries.

Recent weeks have been characterized by a new spike in hostilities carried out by the Mouvement du 23 mars (M-23) and other armed groups against the Congolese armed forces. This resumption of hostilities is a test for the international community, for the M-23 and other armed groups are seeking simply to derail the political process under way. It is a political process that seeks to put an end to this tragedy, which has lasted for far too long. It is a test because some players might be tempted to renege on their commitments. Our message is clear: neighbouring countries must stop providing support to armed groups as they have committed to do. The firm and united message being sent by the international community today is a beneficial one, as it will support the efforts of stakeholders sincerely committed to the goal of sustainable peace in the Great Lakes region.

We have made much progress over recent months. We now have a consistent framework that allows us to finally hope that the tragedy that has lasted more than 20 years in the Great Lakes region will be put to an end. The framework is based on two pillars. The first is the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region, signed on 24 February by 11 countries of the region upon the initiative of the Secretary-General. In that regard, I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his efforts and determination. It is now the responsibility of the signatories to implement their commitments.

We have also seen many encouraging signs in recent weeks. The adoption by the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo of a national oversight mechanism is a step forward towards the crucial reforms of the Congolese army and police. Full-scale measures must now be quickly undertaken. It is also important for the Congolese army to carry out its activities on the ground in an exemplary manner, and that the abuses committed by Congolese soldiers, which are not excusable, be effectively and severely punished by the country's justice system.

At the regional level, on 26 May, the first meeting of the regional oversight mechanism brought together the majority of the Heads of State of the region on the margins of the African Union Summit. The mechanism first and foremost must ensure that the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all States of the region is upheld, beginning with that of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It must also ensure that their security is not threatened.

The actions taken by Ms. Mary Robinson, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region, will be crucial for the coordination and assessment of national and regional efforts to implement the commitments undertaken. Madam President, you can be assured of the firm support of France, which remains at your side.

The second pillar of this new context is resolution 2098 (2013), adopted unanimously on 28 March last. The heart of the mandate of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) has not changed: it remains the protection of civilians. However, so as to contribute to that objective, the resolution authorizes, in an unprecedented manner, the deployment of an Intervention Brigade within MONUSCO. The Brigade's mandate is to neutralize armed groups that engage in violence and threaten civilians. France would like to see the Brigade to become operational as soon as possible.

Another key aspect of resolution 2098 (2013) is that of sexual violence, which continues to see widespread use as a weapon of war, usually with total impunity. Here we welcome the initiative of Ms. Mary Robinson to convene, jointly with the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, a conference devoted to the role of women in the process of implementation of the Framework agreement. We know that in that region the bodies of women are all too often the battlefields of men, and, as President Kim noted earlier, that is a blot on our conscience.

Allow me, before concluding, to touch on the issue of development. As Ms. Robinson noted, it is now time to plan for peace dividends for the region as a whole. Here I welcome the personal commitment of President Kim in the context of resolving this crisis, as well as the recent World Bank pledge for the implementation of the commitments undertaken by the Democratic Republic of the Congo during the signing of the Framework agreement.

France and the European Union will also contribute to the development of the region. The relaunching of the economies of the region will also require transparency in the exploitation of natural resources. The lack of transparency in the exploitation of mining resources must end. As the Council is aware, upon the initiative of the United Kingdom and with the full support of France, the countries of the Group of Eight adopted at the beginning of the month an action plan for transparency in the extractive industries. Moreover, we intend to fully support, both politically and technically, the efforts of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to establish a certification mechanism for minerals from the region. All of those tools will allow us to combat bad practices and to increase the benefits reaped from the exploitation of the region's natural resources for its peoples.

At a time when the M-23 is once again carrying out attacks around Goma, it is important to spare no effort not only to vanquish those who threaten peace but also to relaunch the political dynamic that began with the Framework agreement. So as to allow for the establishment of a lasting peace, all players in the region must cooperate so as to defeat violence and looting. Only then will the Framework agreement be able to pave the way for a tangible improvement in the security situation and living conditions in the Great Lakes region.

Today, on behalf of the millions of people who have died and whom the region has mourned for so many years, we have a collective obligation to succeed.

Mr. Esaw (Togo) (*spoke in French*): Madam President, I wish to thank your country for having convened this high-level debate on the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Great Lakes region and to welcome the presence of the Secretary of State to preside over it. I welcome also the presence of the Secretary-General. I thank him for his ongoing efforts in the quest for a lasting solution to the conflict in the region and congratulate him on his statement. Finally, I should like to welcome the participation in this meeting of the President of the World Bank, high-level representatives of the African Union, Ministers from the Great Lakes region and all other Ministers present.

The holding of this debate is tangible proof of the significance attached by the Council collectively and other Member States individually to the resolution of the recurring conflicts in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In that regard, I welcome the appointment on 18 June last of Mr. Russ Feingold as Special Representative of the United States of America to the Great Lakes Region of Africa.

I begin my remarks on a note of optimism by echoing the joint statement made by the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the President of the World Bank on the theme "Peace within reach", on the eve of a joint tour in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in other countries of the region.

Togo shares that optimism, because after more than a decade of suffering, the peoples of the Great Lakes region deserve to finally see peace restored. That is why my country wishes to express its gratitude to the Heads of State of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, the Southern African Development Community and the African Union, as well as the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Council for their joint determined efforts to put an end to the massive violations of human rights in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, especially sexual violence and rape, which have become weapons of war.

I wish most particularly to welcome the Framework agreement, signed on 24 February 2013 with the support of the United Nations, through which the 11 Heads of State of the region have undertaken to act together to meet common challenges in the areas of security, governance and socioeconomic development.

It is also important that all signatories to the agreement make a good-faith effort to implement the provisions of that important agreement. It goes without saying that the countries concerned must play a key role in ensuring the success of this new peace architecture, which is being built slowly but surely. We congratulate the authorities of the Democratic Republic of the Congo for the actions already undertaken in this direction, as the Minister for Foreign Affairs of that country just explained.

However, efforts must continue, especially in the areas of security sector reform and the protection of civilians, especially women and children, to arrest the perpetrators and masterminds of crimes, regardless of who they might be, thereby putting an end to the reign of impunity.

Moreover, Togo welcomes once again the adoption by the Council of resolution 2098 (2013), which authorizes the deployment of the Intervention Brigade, charged with fighting the armed groups active in the east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Increased support for the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo should enable that special unit to achieve its goals.

We commend the remarkable progress achieved in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. However, we must condemn the actions of the Mouvement du 23 mars, which led to the ongoing clashes between the rebels and the Congolese army.

If the peace process is to be continued without impediment, it is also important that the armed forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Rwandan Defence Forces work together to neutralize the Forces Démocratiques de Libération du Rwanda, which are promoting insecurity on the Rwandan-Congolese border and damaging the good relations between the two countries.

Over and above domestic and external political factors, hunger and poverty are the accelerators of the dynamic of violence. It is hunger and poverty that recruit idle and desperate young people into armed groups. Togo therefore welcomes the international community's inclusion of the development and regional economic integration parameter into the comprehensive conflict resolution strategy in the region. In that regard, the World Bank deserves our gratitude for having shown the way forward.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Great Lakes region can, like other African countries, recover from conflict and progress towards the Millennium Development Goals. Their populations deserve to be given this opportunity through the support of the international community.

Mr. Mehdiyev (Azerbaijan): At the outset, I would like to thank the United States presidency for convening this debate on the situation in the Great Lakes region. We welcome the presence at this very important meeting of United States Secretary of State John Kerry and other high-level officials. We are also grateful to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, World Bank President Jim Yong Kim, Special Envoy Mary Robinson, African Union Commissioner Ramtane Lamamra, and the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda for their statements.

Today's meeting is being held against the background of renewed hostilities initiated by the Mouvement du 23 mars in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. Azerbaijan condemns attacks by the rebel group, which have caused civilian casualties and displacements, and undermined regional and international efforts towards a negotiated resolution of the conflict. Indeed, the situation in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, particularly the destabilizing activities of the armed groups, grave human rights violations and abuses in conflict-affected areas, and the humanitarian impact of the crisis, represent the most significant challenges. Concerns about the increasingly difficult political environment and security situation in the country require redoubled efforts at the national and international levels.

The signing of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region on 24 February was undoubtedly an important achievement that added new impetus to diplomatic and political efforts and raised expectations that the crisis in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo could be resolved. It is important that all relevant actors involved consistently demonstrate the necessary political will and spare no effort to translate the goals of the Framework into tangible outcomes.

What has been clear at the outset is that the diplomatic and political efforts should in no way lead to the consolidation of illegal actions or be seen as an opportunity for endless discussions of unsubstantial and unacceptable claims, as has been the case in some other situations of armed conflict. It is critical that responsibility and accountability, as these notions are understood in international law, have been from the very beginning among the key elements guiding the common approach of the international community.

In its presidential statement adopted today (S/PRST/2013/11), the Security Council demanded that all armed groups cease immediately all forms of violence and that their members fully disband and disarm, and

emphasized the renewed commitment of all countries to neither tolerating nor providing assistance or support of any kind to armed groups. We also welcome the Council's principled stand on the need to end impunity for violations of international humanitarian and human rights law committed during the conflict.

The Force Intervention Brigade is an essential element of efforts to address the threat posed by the presence of armed groups in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. At the same time, it is clear that the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo cannot be resolved by military means alone. Being complementary to the political process, the impact of the Intervention Brigade will be effective only if the national and regional commitments under the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework are implemented in a proper and timely manner.

An important prerequisite of conflict resolution in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is regional support. We commend the African Union, the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region and other regional actors, as well the countries of the region, for their contribution to finding a lasting solution to the conflict. It is crucial that they continue to work together towards the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework. It is also imperative that all countries of the region respect each other's sovereignty and territorial integrity, as well as the principles of non-interference, good-neighbourliness and regional cooperation

We welcome the initial steps taken by the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to fulfil its commitments under the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework, including those aimed at ending impunity for serious human rights violations and abuses and moving forward on security sector reform. These efforts will undoubtedly contribute to strengthening the population's confidence in the State's institutions and help lay solid foundations for the development of the country.

The sustained engagement and support of the international community are crucial in promoting stability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the entire region. We commend the personal efforts of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and his Special Envoy Mary Robinson. The joint visit of the Secretary-General and the President of the World Bank Group, and the announcement of a development package of $1 billion by the World Bank, added the potential for significant incentives in moving the peace agenda and prospects of enhanced regional integration forward. Greater coordination among donors is essential to ensuring that assistance supports national and regional efforts to address the root causes of the conflict.

Azerbaijan also commends the contribution of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the troop-contributing countries to maintaining peace, security and stability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and strongly condemns all attacks against peacekeepers.

In conclusion, I would like once again to thank you, Madam, for convening this important debate, which has provided a useful opportunity to reiterate the international community's sustained engagement on the Great Lakes issue and its strong support to the Framework initiative.

Mr. Wang Min (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China appreciates the United States initiative to convene this debate on the situation in the Great Lakes region. We welcome Secretary of State Kerry in presiding over today's meeting.

I thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, President Jim Yong Kim of the World Bank and Special Envoy Mary Robinson for their briefings. I listened attentively to the statements of the African Union and the countries of the region.

The Great Lakes region is situated at the centre of the African continent and is endowed with natural resources, a storied history and rich cultures. It has unique development potential and advantages. However, due to such factors as an unstable regional security situation and protracted disputes and conflicts, security and development in the Great Lakes region have encountered constraints and difficulties.

It was encouraging that, thanks to the joint efforts of the countries of the region and in particular to the initiative of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, in February the countries of the region signed the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region. This marked an important step by countries of the region towards resolving disputes by themselves and achieving regional peace and development through cooperation.

Peace and development in the Great Lakes region have been offered an important opportunity. China highly appreciates the efforts of the countries of the region to implement the Framework. We hope that all parties will proceed on the basis of their common and long-term interests in safeguarding regional peace and development, act with resolve, seek consensus, implement their commitments in good faith, resolve regional disputes and conflicts once and for all, and embark on the path to lasting peace and sustainable development as soon as possible. To that end, I should like to stress the following four points.

First, it is crucial to pursue the positive momentun in fully implementing the Framework. The urgent task at hand is to ensure the complete cessation of hostilities and to restore stability to the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Armed groups should voice their grievances through dialogue and negotiations and conclude agreements to end violence with the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, so as to create conditions for easing the humanitarian situation in the eastern part of the country.

Secondly, the support of the Government in strengthening capacity-building and providing security should be the focus in implementing the Framework. China welcomes the Government's establishment of a national oversight mechanism to implement the Framework. The armed forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo should assume the primary responsibility for safeguarding national security and protecting civilians. The Intervention Brigade of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo should help and support the country's armed forces in responding to threats from armed groups, under the Security Council's mandate.

Cooperation through dialogue and the rebuilding of mutual trust among the countries of the Great Lakes region is crucial to restoring peace and stability in the region and achieving development. We hope that the countries of the region will — on the basis of mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity and through the 11-4 Framework oversight mechanism and the International Conference of the Great Lakes region joint verification mechanism — strengthen communication and cooperation, participate actively in the drafting of regional benchmarks for the Framework and commit themselves to peace and development in the region.

Fourthly, the international community should scale up its support and assistance and contribute positively to long-term peace and stability in the Great Lakes region. We hope that the United Nations will work with the African Union, the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region and other regional mechanisms, strengthen coordination, foment synergy and push the parties to honour their commitments to the Framework by taking action. We also hope that the World Bank's $1 billion to the Great Lakes region will be disbursed quickly to support the countries of the region to develop their national economies, improve people's livelihoods and achieve lasting peace.

As stated by Chinese President Xi Jinping during his recent visit to Africa in March, China is confident that the setbacks and difficulties being experienced by some African regions will by no means stop the continent's steady progress towards peace, development and progress. China remains Africa's steadfast friend and partner. We will remain resolute in supporting African States in their efforts to safeguard their sovereignty and resolve African issues themselves.

I would like to reiterate here that we have all along actively supported the countries of the Great Lakes region in promoting peace. For many years, China has been a participant in the United Nations peacekeeping mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We have made tireless efforts to preserve security and stability in that country. We are ready to work with the international community and the countries of the region to contribute positively to freeing the people of the Great Lakes region from the suffering caused by war and conflict, as well as to achieve peace, stability and development at an early date.

Mr. Masood Khan (Pakistan): We would like to thank Secretary of State John Kerry for having presided earlier over this special meeting of the Security Council. The initiative of the United States gives fresh impetus to the quest for peace and security in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and its neighbourhood. Today's debate brings together the Secretary-General, the President of the World Bank, Special Envoy Mary Robinson and leaders of the region. This is synergy in action.

We pay special tribute to the Secretary-General, who, despite heavy odds and some setbacks, assembled the leaders of 11 countries and four guarantors — the United Nations, the African Union, the International

Conference of the Great Lakes Region and the Southern African Development Community — in the common cause of peace and stability in the Great Lakes Region. That is a big-picture approach.

The big picture requires that countries in the region build a strong nexus between peace and development. There can be no development without peace in the region. Regional economic integration should replace the toxic legacy of pogroms and the reign of terror imposed by militias and armed groups.

The Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework holds out the promise to deliver peace. Special Envoy Robinson has testified that some progress is being made. We should maintain the momentum generated by positive developments.

The big picture dictates that killings must end, violations of international, human and humanitarian laws — such as executions, sexual violence and forced recruitment — must cease. Impunity should not be condoned. Perpetrators should be held accountable.

The Intervention Brigade under the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) is being deployed. It must succeed. The Brigade is one of the tools in the overall strategy to act as a deterrent. It is not meant to be a substitute for the Congolese army, nor a panacea for the problems in the eastern part of the country. As resolution 2098 (2013) underlines, ultimately, a well-trained and adequately equipped rapid-reaction force within the Congolese army will take over responsibilities from the Brigade. MONUSCO remains a cornerstone of the new strategy.

We all know that the process of implementing the Framework is not going to be easy. It is important that regional partners and the neighbours of the Democratic Republic of the Congo be fully on board and that they implement the Framework in good faith. It is also critical that all countries respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of neighbouring States. Credible and verifiable measures should be taken to disarm, disband and demobilize groups that defy the writ of the State. Allegations can be investigated and truths established. Realistic and time-bound benchmarks should be developed to monitor the progress in the implementation of the Framework.

We welcome the initial steps taken by the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to implement the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework and to establish the national oversight mechanism. The responsibility for the maintenance of peace and security in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo should be gradually transferred to its armed forces and police. The Democratic Republic of the Congo should expand security sector reform, consolidate State authority and work towards national reconciliation.

Pakistan is strongly committed to the goals of peace and stability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Great Lakes region. Pakistani peacekeepers in MONUSCO have played an important role in restoring and bolstering stability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. They have carried out daring operations against armed groups, contributed to the training and capacity-building of the Congolese national security forces and worked on community welfare projects. Many of our soldiers have laid down their lives on the soil of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Our peacekeepers will continue to protect civilians and to implement MONUSCO's mandate.

We hope that there will be a new dawn for the people of the Great Lakes region. This century is Africa's century. As Africa moves towards robust economic growth and attains political clout, the Great Lakes region should not be held back by strife and conflict. The illicit exploitation of minerals should stop. The rich resources of the region should now be harnessed for the benefit of its people. The countries of the region should assume their rightful place in Africa and the comity of nations. The Great Lakes region should become an ark of stability and prosperity in the continent. The United Nations should succeed in its mission.

Mr. Kim Sook (Republic of Korea): At the outset, I would like to express my sincere appreciation for the initiative of the United States presidency of the Security Council this month in convening today's ministerial meeting. We welcome the presence of Secretary of State John Kerry to preside over the meeting. I also wish to thank the Secretary-General, the President of the World Bank, Special Envoy Mary Robinson and Commissioner Ramtane Lamamra for their participation and their briefings. We also appreciate the high-level presence of Ministers from the members of the Security Council and the countries of the Great Lakes region. We are confident that today's meeting will provide an excellent opportunity to review the progress thus far and further bolster the momentum for achieving sustainable peace

and development in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region as a whole.

The Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region constitutes a strong political foundation for the region's lasting peace and stability. The participating countries must share a common responsibility to implement the commitments of the Framework. Full and uninterrupted implementation by all concerned the parties concerned at the national, regional and international level must be ensured.

The Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo has the primary responsibility for its own reforms. It should continue to undertake extensive reforms in the areas of security, governance, decentralization and democratization with firm commitment. Enhancing effective capacity-building in the security sector, among other areas, should lead the process. While respecting the sovereignty of neighbouring countries, enhancing regional cooperation by deepening economic integration is vital. Maximizing this integration will be a key part of achieving broader and longer-term development goals and, ultimately, political stability.

We are of the view that the Framework's success depends upon an oversight mechanism with well-defined benchmarks that are verifiable and action-oriented. The benchmarks should also include a process to address those that fall short of their stated goals.

We fully support the holistic approach to peace and development in addressing the challenges in the Great Lakes region. In that regard, it was highly commendable that the Secretary-General and his Special Envoy visited the region with World Bank President Jim Yong Kim. The unprecedented joint visit by the leaders of the United Nations and the World Bank clearly shows the value of an integrated effort that addresses both the security and development issues of the region. In order for that partnership to bear fruit, close cooperation and coordination between the two bodies should be further refined and strengthened. We hope that the partnership can continue and expand to other areas as well.

One of the important policy goals of my Government is the concurrent realization of peace, security and economic and social development, not only at the national but also at the regional and global levels. As a part of that policy effort, my Government will continue to actively engage in international development cooperation. As the countries of the Great Lakes region pursue security and development, the past development experience of the Republic of Korea could be helpful. The Republic of Korea is the only country that has transformed itself from a least developed country to donor country within just six decades. The "New Village Movement" can provide a useful model for rural development and poverty eradication in the region.

In conclusion, we believe it is essential to maintain high-level engagement and commitment from the international community. We are confident that the Framework, with firm support from the international community, will surely contribute to the political stability and the economic development of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Great Lakes region.

Sir Mark Lyall Grant (United Kingdom): I thank the United States for convening this debate and for the personal commitment that Secretary of State Kerry has shown by presiding over it. It is vitally important that the Security Council maintains its focus on the region at this critical time. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General, his Special Envoy Mary Robinson, World Bank President Kim, Commissioner Lamamra and Foreign Ministers Tshibanda N'tungamulongo and Kutesa for their briefings this morning.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo has been a crucible of conflict for more than two decades. Brutal cycles of violence threaten both national and regional peace and stability. We have seen yet more horrors in the latest cycle of violence as the Mouvement du 23 mars (M-23) militia commit rapes, carry out summary executions and recruit child soldiers. The Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR), while its threat is much reduced, has also continued to carry out abuses, exploiting the instability created by the M-23 rebellion.

Despite the latest outbreak of violence, we have an opportunity now to begin a new chapter in the troubled region that ends the people's suffering and brings peace to the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. In February, countries of the region came together and committed to building peace under the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region. Special Envoy Robinson is supporting their efforts.

Resolution 2098 (2013) authorizes the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the

Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) to neutralize and disarm all those armed groups that pose the greatest threat to civilians, not the least the M-23 and the FDLR. Together, those different elements represent a unique opportunity to address the root causes of the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and to end the cycle of violence once and for all.

We must seize this opportunity with determination and vigour. First and foremost, countries in the region must implement their commitments under the Framework agreement. The Democratic Republic of the Congo has made a positive start with the development of a national oversight mechanism. Major challenges remain on security-sector reform and extending Government authority to the eastern part of the country. Both these steps are necessary to bring peace and prosperity to the Congolese people. But the wider region must also deliver on its commitments. That means, above all, that all countries show respect for their neighbours' territorial integrity and stop any and all assistance to armed groups. It is a matter of great concern to my Government that the latest report of the Group of Experts on the arms embargo against the Democratic Republic of the Congo refers to continuing external support to rebel groups in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. The meeting of the signatories at the General Assembly in September must produce clear benchmarks to measure progress on all the commitments made in the Framework agreement.

MONUSCO should play its role in support of national and regional efforts. The Council has given the Mission a more robust mandate that will put greater pressure on armed groups. MONUSCO will soon carry out offensive operations informed by the latest military technology, including unmanned aerial systems. That pressure must be accompanied with a demobilizational plan that offers combatants an alternative to fighting. MONUSCO is adapting to developments on the ground and demonstrating a flexibility in responsiveness that other United Nations peacekeeping missions would do well to emulate.

The United Kingdom stands ready to support all those efforts. We are already providing training to some of the United Nations peacekeeping troops that will soon deploy in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. On our "preventing sexual violence" initiative, we are assisting with the collection and preservation of forensic evidence to help bring to justice perpetrators of crimes of sexual violence. And we are providing support to peace initiatives in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, which are fully integrated with the Framework agreement. All donor support should be aligned with the regional and national benchmarks of the Framework to establish a basis for mutual accountability.

We must stay strong in our pursuit of peace. Gains made are fragile and need unyielding support from within the Democratic Republic of the Congo, from the immediate neighbours in the region and from the international community. We must not squander progress with blame or retribution. Accusations by countries in the region not backed up by evidence only undermine our efforts. When the Council adopted resolution 2098 (2013), the representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo said that his country was daring to hope (see S/PV.6943). I can assure him that we are all hoping with him. The Council, the international community and, above all, the countries of the region must dare to do all that they can for the people of the Great Lakes and work together to keep our hopes of peace alive.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We would like to thank the United States delegation for the initiative of convening this debate of the Security Council on such a relevant topic. We welcome the participation in today's meeting of a number of high-level officials.

We have from the outset actively supported the good offices of the Secretary-General for a swift stabilization of the situation in the Great Lakes region, which have made possible the signing of the Framework Agreement in Addis Ababa on 24 February. This initiative established the problems of the region as one of the top priorities of the Security Council and the international community as a whole. We welcome the vigorous efforts of the Special Envoy of the United Nations Secretary-General on the Region of the Great Lakes, Ms. Mary Robinson, to discharge her mandate.

We view the outcomes of the joint visit to the region from 22 to 24 May of the Secretary-General and the President of the World Bank as an important milestone in encouraging the signatories to the Framework Agreement to strictly comply with its spirit and letter, and to consistently fulfil their obligations. We welcome the establishment and launch of a regional oversight mechanism involving all the signatories of the Framework Agreement in order to develop performance benchmarks for its practical implementation. We also

note the decision of the President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mr. Joseph Kabila, to establish a national oversight mechanism.

We share the conclusion of the report of the Secretary-General (S/2013/387) that the political agreements must be reinforced by a deepening of economic ties among the neighbouring States. In this context, we welcome the intention of the World Bank to provide $1 billion with a view to the development of the Great Lakes region and to strengthening economic cross-border ties and the well-being of the people.

In order to implement these plans, there is a need for a speedy and full cessation of violence in the region. We strongly condemn the illicit armed groups that have resumed fighting in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. The result of the recent escalation of violence is yet more civilian victims, new flows of refugees and internally displaced persons, and violations of international humanitarian law and human rights. Such violations are absolutely inadmissible. It is important to conduct careful investigations and to bring the perpetrators to justice.

Any support for illicit armed groups must be halted. We expect the deployment of a fully operational Force Intervention Brigade under resolution 2098 (2013) within the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO). This should assist in achieving a qualitative breakthrough in combating anti-Government armed groups and ultimately contribute to establishing a climate of trust among neighbours and advance the settlement process.

At this difficult stage of regional development, assistance from the United Nations, aimed at achieving sustainable and long-term peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in the Great Lakes region as a whole, is more urgent than ever. At the same time, let us not forget that the primary responsibility for ensuring progress in the peace process is borne by the countries of the region themselves. Important assistance in that regard should also be provided by the African Union and subregional organizations.

We must not lose sight of the crucial need for comprehensive reform of the security sector in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in order to bolster the national army, which, in the final analysis, must take over all functions and responsibilities for protecting civilians and ensuring the territorial integrity of the country. Work must be done to eradicate the root causes of the never-ending conflict, including by establishing order in the exploitation of mineral resources. The primary responsibility in these matters also lies with the Congolese people.

For its part Russia, with other members of the international community, will continue to support the people and Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the States of the Great Lake region in resolving the challenges before them.

Mr. Loulichki (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): I thank the presidency of the United States for organizing this debate on the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Great Lakes region. The peoples of the region and our entire continent attach great importance to this high-level meeting aimed at consolidating the peace dynamic arising from the Framework Agreement of 24 February. We welcome the presence of United States Secretary of State Kerry and the participation of Ministers representing Council members and the States of the region, as well as the participation of the President of the World Bank. Finally, on behalf of Morocco I commend the leadership, vision and commitment of Ms. Robinson, as well as her unwavering commitment and for her efforts to assist the full implementation of Agreement of 24 February.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo has suffered a succession of crises in recent decades that have harmed its national cohesion and threatened its sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity. Behind the criminal acts committed in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo by armed militias and other armed groups, such as the Mouvement du 23 mars, the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda and the Lord's Resistance Army, lies a tragic humanitarian crisis that has impacted millions of lives and violated the fundamental rights of innocent civilians, especially women and children. The perpetrators of these crimes must be brought to justice.

The impact of the Congolese crisis also has a regional dimension. The entire Great Lakes region and Central Africa have been affected by the crisis in humanitarian, security and economic terms. They all have a historical responsibility to end it definitively and irreversbly.

The signing on 24 February of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Great Lakes Region

opened up real prospects for peace. The agreement, which is innovative in its approach, offers true hope for a sustainable end to instability in the region and a settlement of a crisis that has lasted too long. This opening has been supplemented by measures taken by the Council to adapt mandate of the United Nations Organization Stabilisation Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo's (MONUSCO) to the realities on the ground, including with the adoption of resolution 2098 (2013).

Regionally, the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region also put in place important mechanisms that are contributing to the stabilization and verification efforts. Finally, the joiny visit of the Secretary-General, the President of the World Bank and Ms. Robinson made it possible to graft onto the dynamics in the field an economic development dimension aimed at boosting economic exchanges, reduce vulnerabilities, and promote economic regional integration, especially through the reactivation of the Economic Community of the Great Lakes Countries (CEPGL) in favour of peace.

We welcome this approach, which is being coordinated by the Secretary-General and the President of the World Bank, inaugurated in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and planned for next autumn in the Sahel. We hope that this approach will be taken up in other crisis situations where the correlation between peace and development is so critical.

Never have so many efforts been undertaken to resolve the Congolese crisis, and we must applaud that. Yet this important dynamic for peace cannot bear fruits uneless all signatories honour their commitments and build mutual confidence by building together a lasting peace and common prosperity. In that context, we welcome the commendable efforts undertaken by the Democratic Republic of the Congo to fulfil its obligations and to fully play its role in the peace process. The Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Democratic Republic of the Congo solemnly renewed that commitment this morning.

That having been said, the path ahead remains long and the bilateral partners and the United Nations system are all called upon to fully support the Democratic Republic of the Congo in restoring its authority throughout its national territory and in successfully achieving institutional reform, national reconciliation and human development. The countries of the region must quickly, fully and in good faith implement their respective commitments under the Framework Agreement, especially those relating to the strict respect of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We therefore encourage Special Envoy Robinson, in conjunction with and supported by the Secretary-General's Special Representative for the Democratic Republic of the Congo, to continue to support, coordinate and evaluate the implementation of those commitments.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo ococupies a special place in the heart of the African continent. It holds enormous economic and human potential. Its stability and prosperity directly impact all its neighbours. The current process augurs well to ensure both the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Great Lakes region the stability they long for and to free up the energies of that vast country and the entire region.

Morocco, which has stood by the side of the Congolose people through the most difficult moments of their history and which has participated in all United Nations peacekeeping operations in that country, will maintain its commitment to their national unity and territorial integrity and to the stability of the entire Great Lakes region.

Mrs. Perceval (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, and ask you to convey our gratitude to Secretary of State John Kerry for having emphasized the importance of this meeting by his presence. I also thank the delegation of the United States for placing this matter at the heart of the Council's consideration and its efforts and responsibilities. It is also encouraging to see the participation of ministers and other officials from the region, as well as that of the international community. We also welcome the participation of the Secretary-General, the President of the World Bank and the United Nations Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region, Ms. Mary Robinson.

Argentina believes that the first steps towards the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Great Lakes Region, signed in February, constitute an opportunity to comprehensively consider the underlying causes of the region's problems, to establish the bases for sustainable political, social and economic development and achieve lasting peace. The principle of shared responsibility, on which the

Framework is based, certainly involves the countries of the region; but is also an ethical and political call to the international community in terms of their participation, cooperation and follow-up to the implementation of the Framework.

We reiterate our support for United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) in its task of protecting civilians with full respect for human rights and international humanitarian law. Argentina understands that the Intervention Brigade, as the Secretary-General has said, constitutes yet another aspect of a broad, long-term solution to the situation in the region, but that the primary responsibility for protecting civilians and the territorial integrity of States lies with Governments and their armed forces.

Argentina believes that it is an absolute priority for the Governments and peoples of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region to affirm and translate into action the words "never again" in the face of the continuing violations of international humanitarian law and human rights committed in the region by armed groups of various affiliations.

We are particularly concerned by reports to the effect that some of those violations have been committed by some members of Government security forces. We urge the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to expand the institutionally urgent democratic transformations of the security, justice and defence sectors.

We call on the States parties to fully fufil their commitment to not tolerate or provide support to any armed group and not to offer protection to those whom the commisison has accused of war crimes, crimes against humanity, acts of genocide of aggression or those who violate the sanctions regime of the United Nations. The fight against impunity is a necessary condition for lasting peace.

We believe that the vulnerable situation of displaced persons and refugees requires immediate humanitarian action. But the right of all men and women to a dignified life will come about only through initiatives such as that led by the Governments of the region, the United Nations, the World Bank and other partners and donors that will contribute to setting in motion infrastructure and development projects and projects that advance sustainable economic growth and social inclusion that will include, as Ms. Robinson remarked, include human rights, gender perspectives, the integration of youth and child protection. By the same token, the legal, legitimate, just, responsible and transparent management and exploitation of natural resources is key for peace and sustainable development.

A few days ago we received a report from the distinguished organization Human Rights Watch that included the testimony of a 12-year old girl who had gone to buy sugar with her friends:

> "I saw a soldier of the M-23. I began to run. The soldier grabbed me and said that he was going to kill me for trying to escape. I stayed quiet. I was very scared. Then he raped me. I screamed but he covered my mouth."

Argentina and the international community believe that we will have defeated poverty, fear, insecurity and violence when we no longer hear — and the annals of human history, including those of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the countries of the region are devoid — of such testimonies. We hope that this meeting, convoked by your delegation, Sir, will move us in that direction.

Mr. Quinlan (Australia): I thank the United States delegation for its initiative in convening this debate and to Secretary Kerry for his presence. I also thank the Secretary-General and his Special Envoy for the Great Lakes region, Ms. Mary Robinson, for their sustained engagement and leadership, and of course all the briefers for their insightful remarks.

As the attendance of the participants today indicates, we are at a pivotal moment in the search for durable peace and security in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Great Lakes region. We should be ashamed by the staggering toll of the conflict: the lives of more than 5, perhaps 6, million people, the displacement of millions more and the subjection of countless men, women and children to horrendous human rights abuses. Today, the Democratic Republic of the Congo is languishing at the bottom of the United Nations Human Development Index.

The Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework provides the best opportunity to definitively break the cycle of violence and instability. We are at a moment of hope because of the leadership and efforts of regional Governments and organizations, working in close cooperation with the United Nations and the Secretary-General himself, and now with the World Bank.

The potential genius of the Framework is that, for the first time, all the relevant parties have made clear commitments to integrate political, security and development efforts — a nexus that is essential to tackling the root causes of instability. The recent joint visit by the World Bank President and the Secretary-General reflects what should be a crucial impetus for the region. There have been encouraging early signs of follow-up on the Framework commitments, but also stark reminders of the sobering challenges ahead. Attacks by the Mouvement du 23 mars and infighting among the Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo (FARDC) near Goma are ongoing. Just last week, attacks by the Allied Democratic Forces in Kamango forced more than 65,000 refugees to flee into Uganda. We note Ugandan Foreign Minister Kutesa's warnings this morning about the Allied Democratic Forces.

The immediate priority must be to ensure that all signatories take practical steps to implement their commitments under the Framework. Where they fail to live up to these commitments, they must be held to account, by their own citizens and civil society, by their regional neighbours, and by the broader international community, including the Security Council.

Australia welcomes the initial efforts of the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to initiate key reforms. The establishment of the Democratic Republic of the Congo's National Oversight Mechanism is an important step, as was the inaugural meeting of the 11+4 regional oversight mechanism and the establishment of the technical support committee. The implementation of tailored, realistic benchmarks will, however, be fundamental to the success of the Framework. It is imperative that broad agreement is reached on the specific benchmarks and how these will be taken forward by the next meeting of the regional oversight mechanism in New York in September.

All signatories have committed under the Framework not to interfere in the affairs of neighbouring countries and to neither tolerate nor provide assistance or support of any kind to armed groups. Any collaboration between the FARDC and the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda must cease, as must any support to the Mouvement du 23 mars.There can be no peace so long as such support continues.

Turning briefly to some key practical challenges and priorities ahead, persistent reports of grave human rights abuses and widespread sexual violence by armed groups and the FARDC undermine the foundations for any lasting peace. At an event Australia co-hosted this week, we heard first-hand the impact of the use of rape as a tool of war to destroy communities in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Impunity cannot be tolerated. It is critical that decisive action is taken to prevent such atrocities and to investigate and prosecute such crimes. In this context, the efforts of the International Criminal Court deserve our full support.

It is also critical that security sector reforms be intensified. Ultimate responsibility far security rests with the Democratic Republic of the Congo Government. A professional and effective army is central to this. The FARDC's capabilities, discipline and cooperation with the United Nations Mission, including the Intervention Brigade, will be critical to the success of efforts in the Kivus. Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration must, finally, also be given genuine priority. The unregulated flow of small arms and failure to implement effective reintegration strategies are themselves root causes and drivers of conflict.

Women's participation and leadership in both the security sector reform and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration processes is essential to long-term peace. So, too, is their direct engagement in the implementation of the Framework. Special Envoy Robinson's work to ensure their full and effective participation, including through the recent Bujumbura Conference is long overdue, prospective and reassuring.

In concluding, Australia reaffirms our strong support for the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the deployment of the Force Intervention Brigade, and expresses our deep appreciation to the troop-contributing countries. The Intervention Brigade cannot, of course, be seen as a panacea or a substitute for the Democratic Republic of the Congo's own responsibilities. What the Brigade can do, and what the Council intended it to do, is to act as a circuit-breaker to create the space for the Democratic Republic of the Congo Government to implement the necessary reforms and tackle underlying issues of the conflict.

The Brigade's creation was an historic and risky decision by the Council, borne out of frustration certainly, but more so from necessity. The Democratic Republic of the Congo and its neighbours have provided

the essential enabling environment for a new start, but implementation will obviously be decisive. The Council itself must continue to give incisive and consistent attention to the Democratic Republic of the Congo to reinforce the incentives for change and to break the cyclical patterns of the past. We all know that this is a genuinely critical moment; we must ensure it becomes transformative.

I understand there is a Congolese saying that "no matter how hard you throw a dead fish in the water, it still will not swim". The framework of hope is very much alive, and we need to ensure it is able to swim.

The President: There are a number of speakers remaining on my list for this meeting. Given the lateness of the hour, I intend, with the concurrence of the members of the Council, to suspend the meeting until 3 p.m.

The meeting was suspended at 1.30 p.m